DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 159 622 CS 004 330

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TITLE All College Students Benefit from Reading Instruction.
PUB DATE Feb 78
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Conference on English in the Two-Year College (13th, Nashville, Tennessee, February 16-18, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Curriculum; *College Instruction; Community Colleges; Higher Education; Junior Colleges; Models; *Reading Development; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs; Remedial Reading Programs

ABSTRACT

Tidewater Community College has developed a reading program which responds to the various needs and skills of all students at a school with an inclusive admissions policy. The Tidewater model defines six categories of student reading ability: remedial (below tenth grade level), adapted (below tenth who work to capacity but are slow learners), corrective (below tenth but done in regular classroom), accelerated (those on any level who learn faster), developmental (on tenth grade level and above), and consulting service (aid to all divisions on campus). Each category may include one or more type of instruction (reading improvement, advanced reading, college reading, or departmental assistance). This model not only provides for all students but also aids the staff in determining methods and materials for reading instruction. (TJ)

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ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM READING INSTRUCTION

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Paper for Southeastern Conference on English in the Two-Year College, Nashville, Tennessee, 16 February, 1978.

A college reading department today must be multi-faceted to actively serve its population. The time is past when remedial reading classes are the only classes offered. While cut-off scores on placement tests still recommend such courses to many, the difficulty of texts and sophistication of curricula require that numerous "good readers" be offered instruction in reading too.

The purpose of this paper is to present a model for a total college reading program based on Schubert and Torgerson's[1] grades one-through-twelve model and Ahrendt's[2] community college reading program. The new model presented is the basis for a sequential reading program in use since 1975 at Tidewater's Frederick campus. It is our belief that reading is a skill development process; since all students learn the process individually, the overall college program must provide for all students.

Schubert and Torgerson identify five components of an overall program: (1) developmental instruction which is defined as on grade level; (2)

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corrective instruction which is below grade level but done in the classroom; (3) remedial instruction which is below grade level but which takes place out of the classroom with a specialist; (4) adapted instruction which is used for slow learners working to capacity; and (5) accelerated instruction for those who are capable of learning faster.

Their model program, then, looks like this:

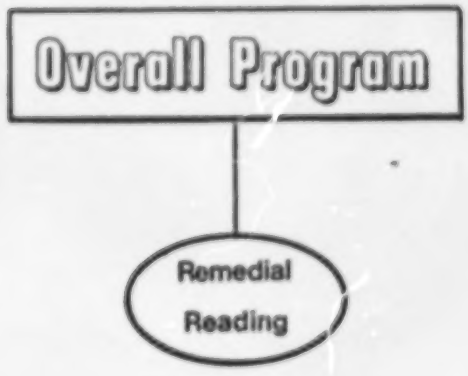
Model 1. Schubert and Torgerson

This program provides maximum coverage to aid all students in developing to capacity. However, few school systems have a 1 - 12 program. Most

provide formal instruction through the seventh grade, and it is assumed that the skills learned by this time will continue to be transferred and developed as the child reads and learns in the content areas.

Ahrendt's study of community college reading programs revealed that most college programs consisted of only one component of the S-T model, i.e. remedial reading.

Model 2. Actual College Program



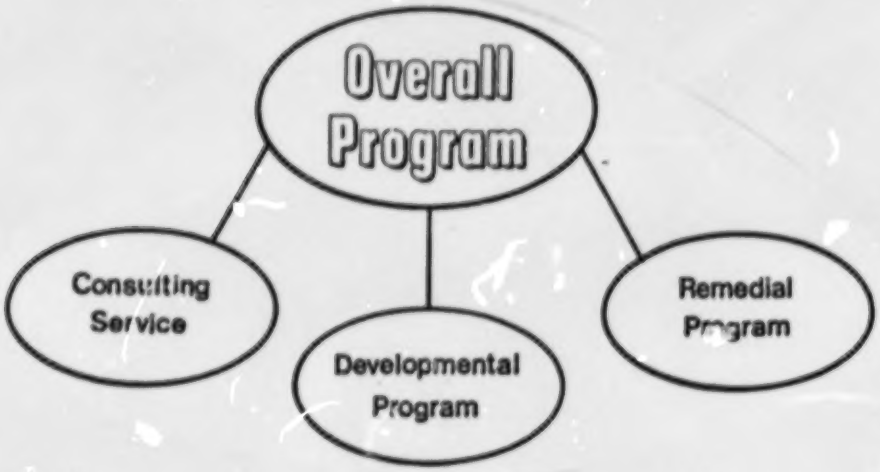
Ahrendt found that some colleges have a developmental course for academically capable students, a few have specialists who help content area instructors, and many have use of learning/communication center facilities. In the conclusion, he states

> The purpose of a well-planned community college reading program is to be of service to the entire* college student body and staff. It should never be intended only to be a service which provides remedial assistance to a small segment of the college population...a reading program must justify its existence as an integral part of the total college program.[3]

* italics mine

To do this, Ahrendt proposes a three-part program: (1) a consulting service to the institution; (2) a developmental program for the entire student body; and (3) a service for remedial students who need specialized assistance.

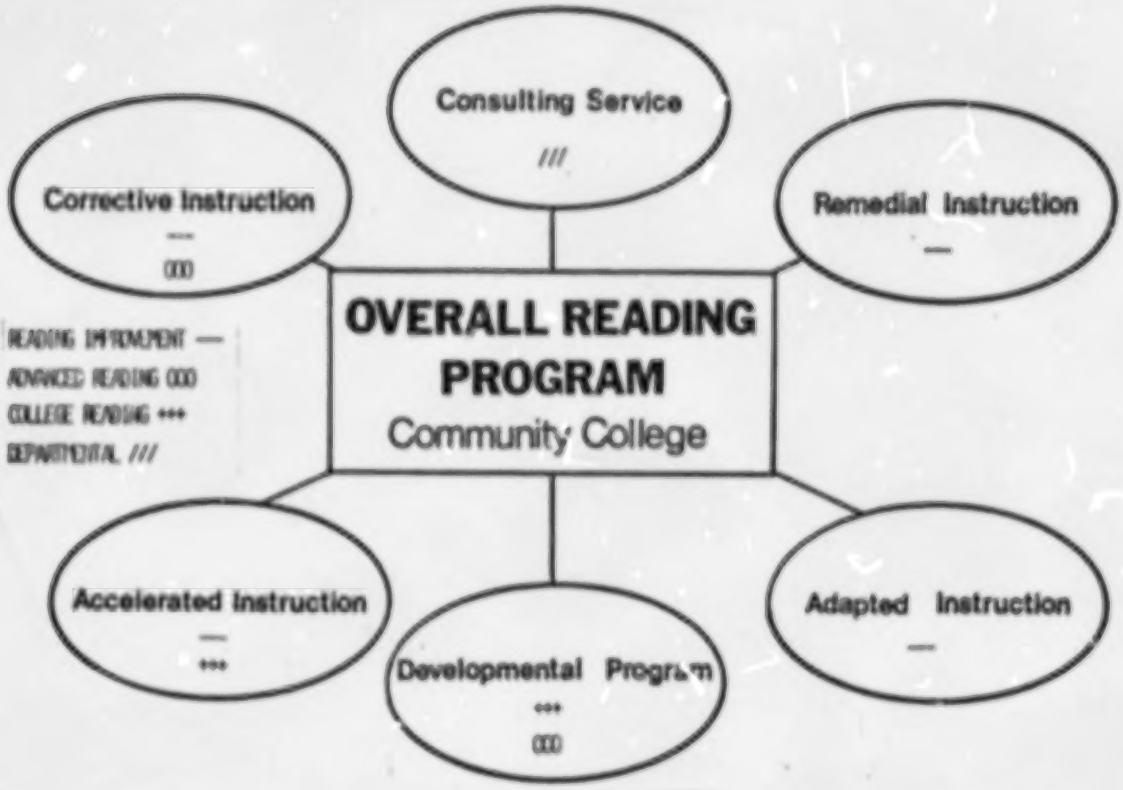
Model 3. Ahrendt's Proposed College Model



Perhaps it is wise to clarify here the meaning of the word <u>developmental</u>. Schubert and Torgerson use it to denote teaching on grade level. Developmental studies departments in colleges are usually the place where remediation takes place before a student begins his curriculum. Further, the goal of developmental studies on most campuses is aid a student in reaching adequate reading skills on the tenth grade level, as that is the current accepted level at which a student can read freshman texts.

The following model which combines components from both sources with the sequential program developed on our campus provides an all-inclusive approach to reading at the college level.

Model 4. Fettlewell College Program



The open-door policy of a college assures that every type of instruction will be needed because every type of student will enroll. Thus, definitions for the 1-12 program apply with some modification.

INSTRUCTION	for	TYPE OF READER
Remedial	→	below 10th grade level
Adapted	→	below 10th who work to capacity but are slow learners
Corrective	→	below 10th, but done in regular classroom
Accelerated	→	those on any level who learn faster
Developmental	→	on tenth grade level and above
Consulting service	→	aid to all divisions on campus

The symbols in the legend indicate which types of instruction are included in each of the courses on our campus. The first and largest component is found in the reading improvement classes. These students range from the ninth grade level down to functional illiteracy. In fact, because the range is so wide, in the summer of 1978 the RI classes will be split into two levels--those reading below eighth and those reading above eighth. Within these individualized classes is a need for remedial, adapted, corrective, and sometimes accelerated instruction.

Advanced Reading and Study skills is offered to students who score borderline tenth grade or who complete the reading improvement course but want to have more than the minimum entrance skills. This course is taken while the student is in his curriculum. There is a need to offer both corrective and developmental instruction to this group. The class is conducted in a teacher-directed, group instruction setting. Emphasis on study skills makes it an extremely important bridge to all other course work.

The third group of students seeking reading courses are those really good readers who are highly motivated, usually well into their curriculum who want to make higher grades or complete their assignments more quickly so they can get on to other things. The College Reading class uses both developmental and accelerated instruction in advanced reading skills, especially in the content area. Students beginning this course at the eleventh or twelfth grade level generally improve from one to four years on Nelson-Denny scores at the end of the ten weeks' time.

The last, but certainly not the least, component of our reading program is the departmental one--providing consulting service to our campus. In the

past four years, it has taken the form of in-service workshops for all faculty in understanding the reading process, vocabulary study, testing, familiarity with the objectives and testing of the reading program. Many faculty have learned how to make success-predictor close tests from pages of their texts. The department regularly runs readability checks on proposed texts and/or teaches faculty how to do their own.

The counseling division works very closely with the reading/English faculty on placement of students into the courses and on keeping statistics to help in program evaluation.

In 1975 when it was decided to combine the reading improvement and basic writing classes to be taught by one instructor, there was a need to prepare English faculty to teach reading. Through a summer workshop, that was accomplished within the department.

Such a program is similar to Ahrendt's proposal because it does provide for all types of students in all types of situations. The labels and numerous categories of reading are important because they provide the rationale for setting up more than one course. They also aid a staff, especially an inexperienced one, in determining methods and materials for reading instruction.

Does this model make an ideal program? Does it work? For now it works. As student needs change, so will the program, but the basic needs for all of these types of instruction is bound to remain for some time to come. For now the model provides what is needed. Among other things, it reminds us that even in a class of twenty students, the needs, abilities, and learning rates and styles vary greatly. Our job is to continually be aware of that and modify our teaching and instruction to help students learn the skills necessary for success in whatever field they choose to study.

Finally, this model applies to a school which has taught various types of reading courses for many years. It is just as applicable to a school which is just now planning a first course—remedial reading. Long range planning now can make a more effective program now and in the future.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Delwyn G. Schubert and Theodore L. Torgerson, Improving the Reading Program, 3rd ed., Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co., 1972.

[2]Kenneth Aurendt, Community College Reading Programs, Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1975.

[3]Ibid., p. 20.